



LEADING A SEDER REMOTELY

SEDER in the YEAR of PLAGUE

2020 5780

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The Seder Plate

- Five or Six items:
- Z'ro'a: shank bone, often a roasted chicken bone: a remembrance of the Passover sacrifice once offered in the ancient Temple in Jerusalem. Symbol that is not eaten.
- Beitzah: roasted, hard-boiled egg: symbol of the festival sacrifice, the hagigah.
- Karpas: parsley or celery: spring symbol, an appetizer.
- Haroset: Reminiscent of the mud the Israelites used to build Pharaoh's store cities. Many possible recipes. Google your favorite! Mine is Ashkenazi. I use: sweet mixture of walnuts, apples, cinnamon, wine, and brown sugar.
- Maror: bitter herb, most often horse radish root, symbol of the bitterness of slavery.
- Hazeret: Seder plates with 5 compartments may not have hazeret. Use a bitter lettuce, like curly endive or romaine, as an alternative to horse radish.



Matzah

- Three special matzahs stacked on the seder table, sometimes with a special cover or on a special plate, used as ritual objects during the seder, as will be explained.
- Some may choose to use Shemurah Matzah, but it is not necessary.
- In addition, you'll want to have matzah on the table for food.
- It's traditional to have nuts for the children to eat or even play with for their amusement. The nuts make the meal special, and encourage questions from the children, "Why is this night different from all other nights?"

There are 15
parts to the
seder
(one slide or
more follows for
each)

Kadesh – 1st
wine blessing

Urchatz – 1st
washing hands

Karpas –
dipping
vegetable

Yahatz – break
middle matzah

Maggid – tell
the story

Rachtza – 2nd
washing

Motzi – 1st
matzah
blessing

Matzah – 2nd
matzah
blessing

Maror – bless
bitter herbs

Korech – Hillel
sandwich

Shulchan


Orech – eat the
meal.

Tzafun –
Afikomen, the
hidden matzah

Barech –
blessing after
meal

Hallel – Psalms

Nirtzah –
concluding
prayers



Kadesh –
kiddush –
blessing first
cup of wine

- Use wine or grape juice.
- Bless and drink four separate times during the seder, corresponding to the four promises of redemption in Exodus 6.
- This first reminds us of the promise, “I will bring you out of Egypt.”
- Actually Kadesh is two blessings: the first for the wine and the second stating the meaning of the holiday.

Urchatz

- First handwashing of two. Given the importance of handwashing with Coronavirus, symbolic of our time. Custom today is without a blessing. Traditionally there's a third after the meal, but rarely done. With Coronavirus, perhaps reinstitute the after meal washing.
- Preparation for dipping the karpas, finger food, which follows.
- I suggest doing it this year with blessing: "Thank you, God, for helping me stay healthy and for saving lives."
- [See your Haggadah for suggested blessing.](https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/the-spirituality-of-washing-for-seder/)
<https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/the-spirituality-of-washing-for-seder/> for blessing: "... ahl rehitzat yadayim, for the washing of hands."

Karpas: Parsley (or any green veggie, like celery)

First of two dippings (second will be before the meal: haroset and maror).

Each person takes a piece, dips in saltwater, and recites the blessing in your haggadah.

Previous practice, centuries ago and being revived today by some: dip in haroset.

Spring custom, also a luxury for free people: appetizers.

Yahatz:
breaking the
middle matzah
(unleavened
bread prepared
for Passover
specifically)

- You should have a stack of 3 ritual matzahs on the table, other than the matzahs to eat as part of the meal.
- Break the middle matzah in half approximately.
- Hide half to be found later by a child. This half becomes the afikomen, slide 29.
- The other half will be eaten before the meal together with the top matzah when saying blessings for matzah (2 parts of seder: motzi and matzah, slide 25).



Maggid

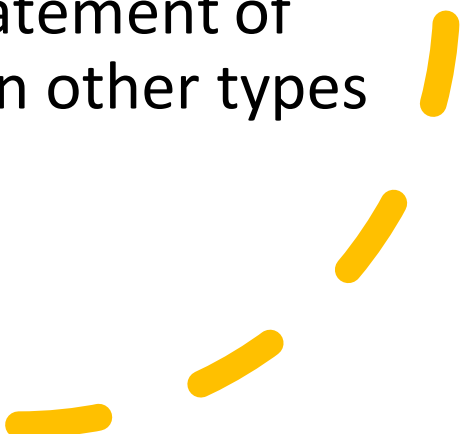
- Maggid is the main body of the seder, telling the story of God's redemption of the Jewish people in the Exodus from Egypt.
- It's the fulfillment of the 4 biblical commandments to tell the story of the Exodus:
- Exodus 13:8 "And you shall explain to your child on that day" from which the word Haggadah comes.
 - *Exodus 12:26: What does this service mean to you? It's a passover service to the Lord when he passed over the houses of Israel in Egypt when he struck the Egyptians and delivered our houses.*
 - *Ex. 3:14: What is this? With a strong hand God took us out of Egypt the house of slavery*
 - *Dt. 6:20-21: When your son asks you in the future, "What do these testimonies statutes and ordinances which the Lord our God commanded you mean?" Then say to your son, "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and the lord took us out with a might hand."*



The Maggid
section is very
long

- The Maggid is the main body of the seder. It includes many readings and prayers.
- It is the compilation of centuries of stories with commentary about the Redemption from Egypt.
- I will include each part I suggest you use, but feel free not to include all the parts if that's your choice.
- I will indicate each reading as part of the Maggid section of the seder, with the word: Maggid.

Maggid: Ha
Lachma
Anya: This is
the Bread of
Affliction

- Matzah is both the bread of poverty and the bread of affliction, poor people's bread and the bread eaten in haste while leaving slavery.
 - The last line brackets the seder with the last line in the entire seder: "This year we are slaves, next year free people." The seder ends with, "Next year in Jerusalem." (see slide 37)
 - Both lines symbolize spiritual and physical freedom.
 - The invitation in this reading is a statement of solidarity with the poor and those in other types of bondage.
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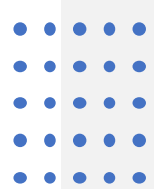
Maggid: The Four Questions

- The purpose of the seder is to pass to the next generation the story of the Redemption of the Jewish People from Egypt.
- Our children must be involved and enjoy the seder to make our history their own.
- Getting the children to ask questions motivates much of the seder.
- Often the youngest child present asks these questions in Hebrew, English or whatever language works.



Maggid:
Avadim
Hayinu: We
were Slaves
in Egypt

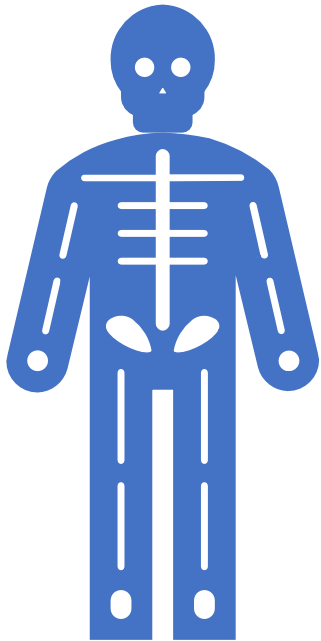
- We start telling the story recounting physical slavery.
- The story of the Exodus is that the Hebrews were involuntary slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and we made ourselves voluntary servants to the God who redeemed us.
- Discussion: How does each person present serve God in their lives?



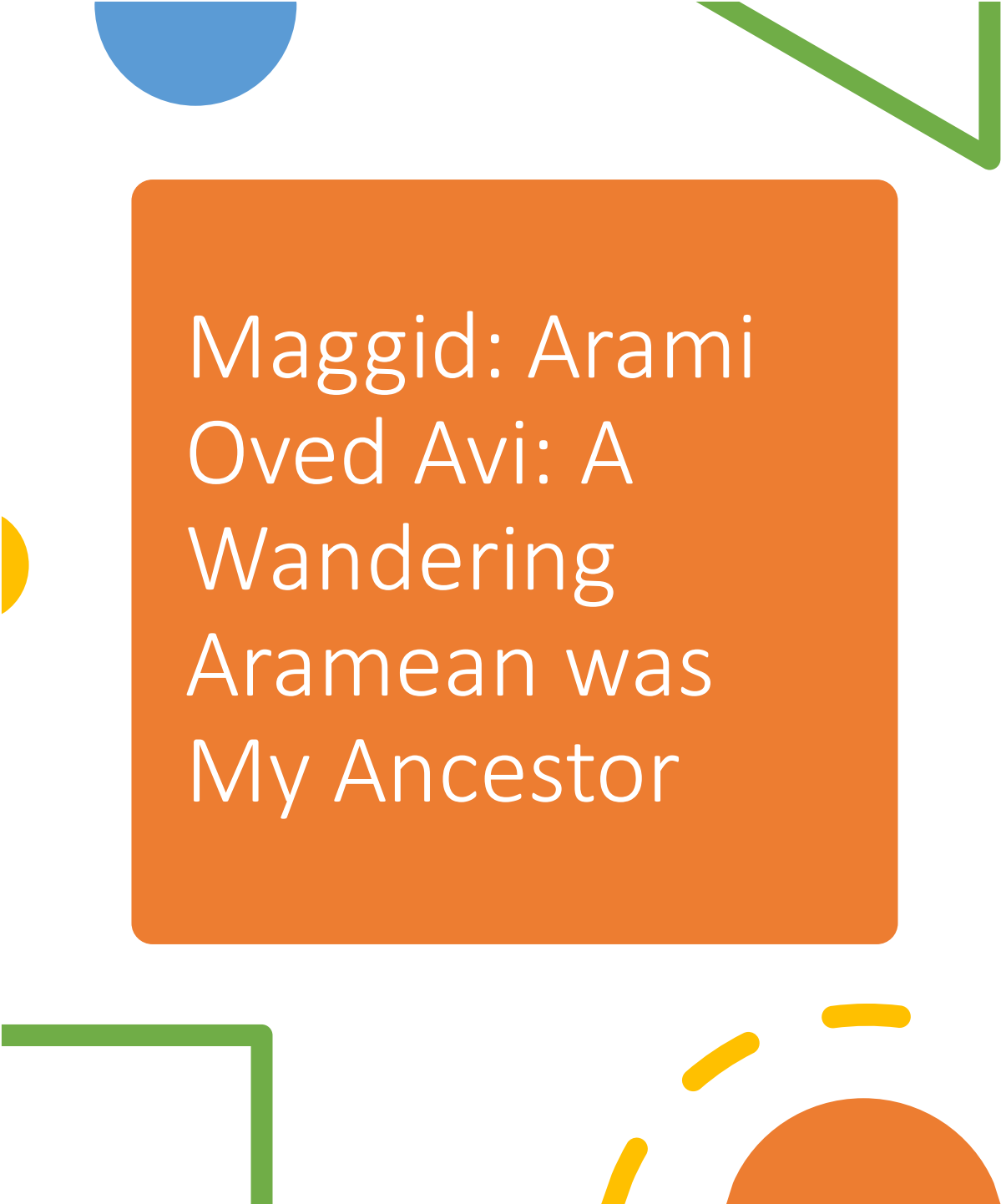
Maggid: The Four Children (Four sons traditionally)

- Each can be considered a type of child, or a type within each of us.
- Hacham, Wise: knows Torah and observes traditions, studious and obedient to the tradition. “The good child.”
- Rasha, Wicked: Exclude themselves from tradition. Deliberately oppositional.
- Tam, Innocent or Simple: Needs an explanation on their level of the Exodus, freedom, slavery, and the values of the seder.
- She’ano yode’a lish’ol, Doesn’t know how/what to ask. Uninvolved: Ask the child pertinent questions: “In what ways are you not free? Do you value freedom? Why and what do you do about freedom?”


MAGGID: In the Beginning, Our Ancestors Worshipped Idols

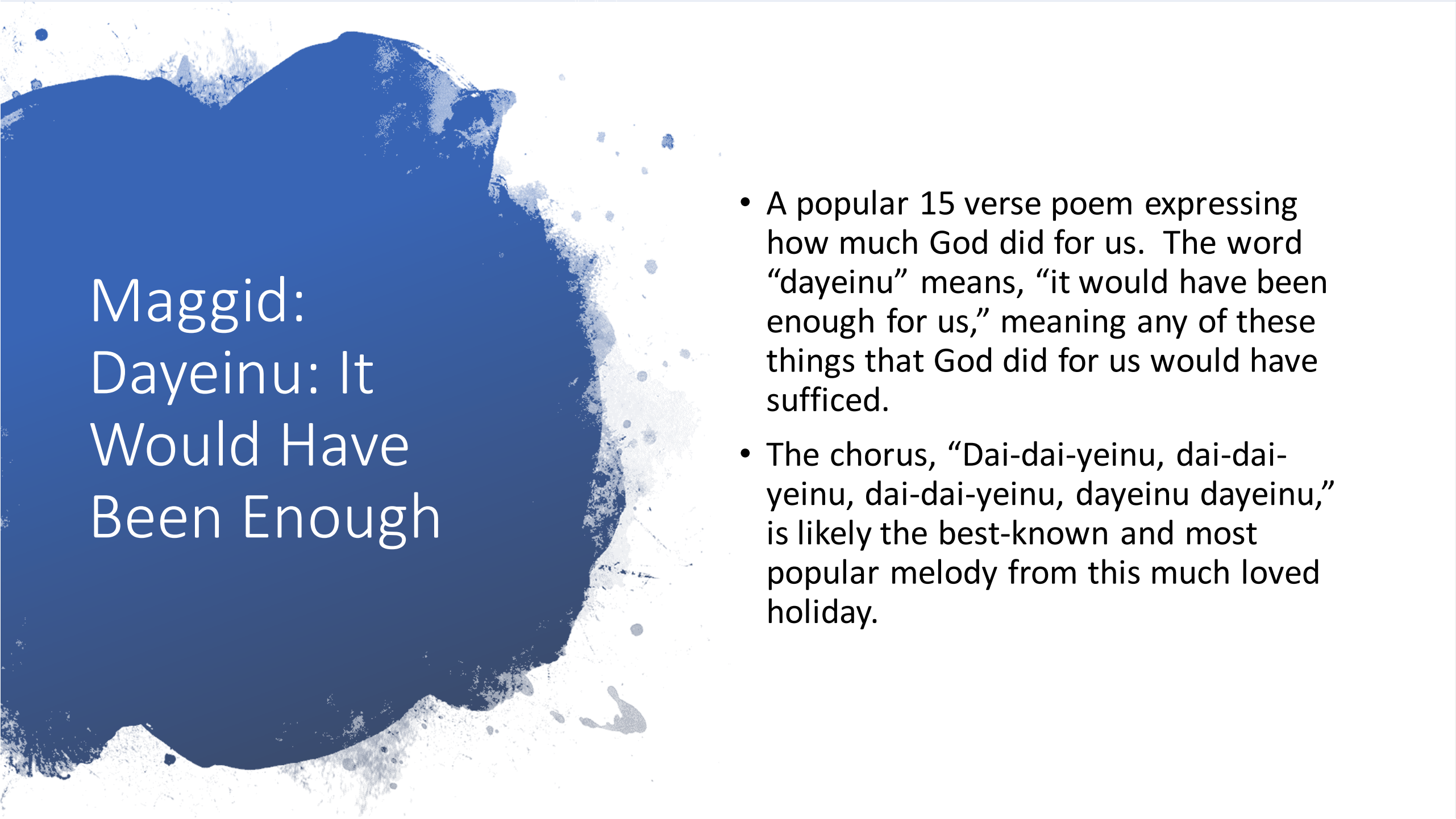


- Seder speaks of two types of slavery: Physical and Spiritual.
- We have already read Avadim Hayinu, recounting our physical slavery in Egypt.
- Now we discuss the spiritual slavery of time immemorial to the gods we fashion.
- Abraham's father, according to the midrash (Jewish lore), was an idol maker. Abraham was the original iconoclast.
- We face the same challenges in our own day and our own lives. The seder invites us to define the idols of our own time and to become iconoclasts.



Maggid: Arami
Oved Avi: A
Wandering
Aramean was
My Ancestor

- A very early seder reading: Deuteronomy 26:1-10 from late first century.
 - Biblically it was the recitation of grateful farmers bringing their offerings to the Temple.
 - A series of midrashic interpretations follows, recounting an early rabbinic interpretation, among the earliest ways our ancestors told the Passover tale.
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Maggid: Dayeinu: It Would Have Been Enough

- A popular 15 verse poem expressing how much God did for us. The word “dayeinu” means, “it would have been enough for us,” meaning any of these things that God did for us would have sufficed.
- The chorus, “Dai-dai-yeinu, dai-dai-yeinu, dai-dai-yeinu, dayeinu dayeinu,” is likely the best-known and most popular melody from this much loved holiday.

Maggid: Eser Makkot: the Ten Plagues

- God visited 10 plagues on Egypt to compel Pharaoh to release the Israelites from slavery in order to serve God.
- We reduce the wine in our cups by one drop for each plague, symbolizing we are not joyful when our enemies die. Each life is precious, even our enemies'.
- The plagues, whether historical or not, are intended as a demonstration of God's power. God seeks human liberation.
- The most often repeated phrase in the Bible is, "You know the heart of the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." The seder teaches that Jews must empathize with the human struggle for freedom because we have experienced involuntary servitude.



Maggid:
Rabban
Gamliel II: 3
Essential
Components
of the Seder

- All three commanded in the Bible.
- Pesah or z'ro'a: a remnant of the Passover lamb sacrifice. The shank bone, often a roasted chicken bone, on the seder plate.
- Matzah: the unleavened bread, symbolic of our exodus in haste, and the "bread of poverty." Most often stacked on a plate of its own.
- Maror: symbolic of the bitterness of slavery. Most often horseradish root on the seder plate.
- Seder plates with 6 sections have a second bitter herb: hazeret, a bitter lettuce, like curly endive or romaine. Either horseradish or a lettuce may be used in the blessing for maror before the meal.



Maggid: B'chol Dor vaDor, In Every Generation

- Essential seder component.
- Our obligation in every generation, every year and really everyday, is to see ourselves as though we personally came out of Egypt.
- The exodus is mentioned multiple times daily in Jewish prayers, and Redemption is central to Jewish belief.
- This states the core reason for the seder, to see ourselves as though we, too, were redeemed.



Maggid: Hallel: Psalms of Praise

- Celebrating this festival, like all festivals, we recite Psalms 113-118, rejoicing at God's deliverance.
- Psalms 113 and 114 before dinner.
- Psalms 115-118 after dinner.
- Look particularly at Psalm 114: "When Israel went forth from Egypt, the House of Jacob from a people of strange speech, Judah became God's holy people, Israel God's dominion."
- These psalms are often sung in Hebrew, and many of the tunes are lovely.




Maggid: Ga'al Yisrael: Redemption and Second Cup of Wine

- Passover is about God's Redemption of Israel from Egyptian slavery and for all time.
- Redemption is a frequent theme in Jewish worship. The exodus is termed "the root experience of the Jewish people."
- We drink the second cup of wine, closing out the Maggid section, the telling of the story.
- The second cup of wine represents the second promise in Exodus 6: "I will save you."
- The underlying message is that God seeks the Redemption and liberation of all humanity.


Rachatza: Washing Before the Meal

- Everyone invited to wash their hands before the meal and recite the blessing.
- The first washing was for the hors d'oeuvres, without a blessing.
- This ritual washing is for the meal we are about to eat.
- This year we also wash as an act of pikuach nefesh, “saving a life.” This year in particular, the life saving aspect of washing must be upper most in our minds.





Motzi,
Matzah 2
parts of the
seder
together

- Traditional blessing for any kind of bread first.
 - Blessing over matzah second.
 - Said over the 3 matzahs, a piece broken off for each person from both the top and the half remaining middle matzah after the blessing.
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Maror: Bitter Herbs

- Take whichever bitter herb you're using: horseradish or a bitter lettuce, and dip it in haroset, or eat it plain if you wish, and experience the bitterness of slavery.
- Commanded biblically to be eaten with matzah, but here it's just eaten with the haroset, symbolizing the bitterness of slavery.



Korech: The Hillel Sandwich

- The great proto-Rabbi, who died in the year 10 c.e., argued that matzah should be eaten with the bitter herbs as the Bible states.
- Therefore, and without a blessing, but in honor of the great Hillel, breaking up the bottom matzah, eat a sandwich of matzah, bitter herbs and haroset.

Shulchan Orech: Let's Eat



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Tsafun: Eating the Afikomen

- A fun game in the seder, keeping the children involved, is “buying back” the afikomen, which is needed to complete the seder.
- The game is practiced one of two ways:
 - First, hide the half piece of matzah in a napkin, and let the children search for it during and after the meal. The seder leader negotiates a prize to “buy” it back.
 - Second, put the wrapped matzah near the seder leader, and during the seder a young child takes the matzah without the seder leader noticing. The seder leader again “buys back” the afikomen to finish the seder.
- In a household where the adults get to play (no young children), the winner states which charity they support, and all the other guests send gifts to that charity.
- To end the meal, everyone receives and eats a small piece of the afikomen, concluding the seder meal.



Barekh: The Birkat Hamazon: Prayer after meals

- Four blessings in the long birkat hamazon, grace after meals:
- 1. Thanking God for sustaining us with food.
- 2. Thanking God for the Land of Israel and for food.
- 3. Thanking God for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, which has actually occurred in our own day, although the blessing is old.
- 4. Thanking God for God's goodness.



Third wine blessing: the promise of Redemption

- The third cup of wine commemorates the third promise in Exodus 6: the promise of Redemption
- According to Jewish lore, future Redemptions, and the final Redemption: the coming of the Messiah, will occur on this night of Passover.
- Nothing bad can happen on this night, by tradition, because it is a night of blessing.

Elijah's Cup

- Although we have not yet celebrated the fourth cup of wine, here we have an extra cup, a fifth cup so to speak, a remembrance of the promise that Elijah the prophet will announce the coming of a future redemption.
- We open the door and welcome Elijah, hoping that this very night Redemption will come and all humanity will be freed from bondage.
- Elijah's cup sits on the seder table as a reminder of the Redemption for which we work and which we await to redeem not just the Jewish people but all humanity.
- When Redemption does not come, we leave the cup for Elijah and do not drink it ourselves.



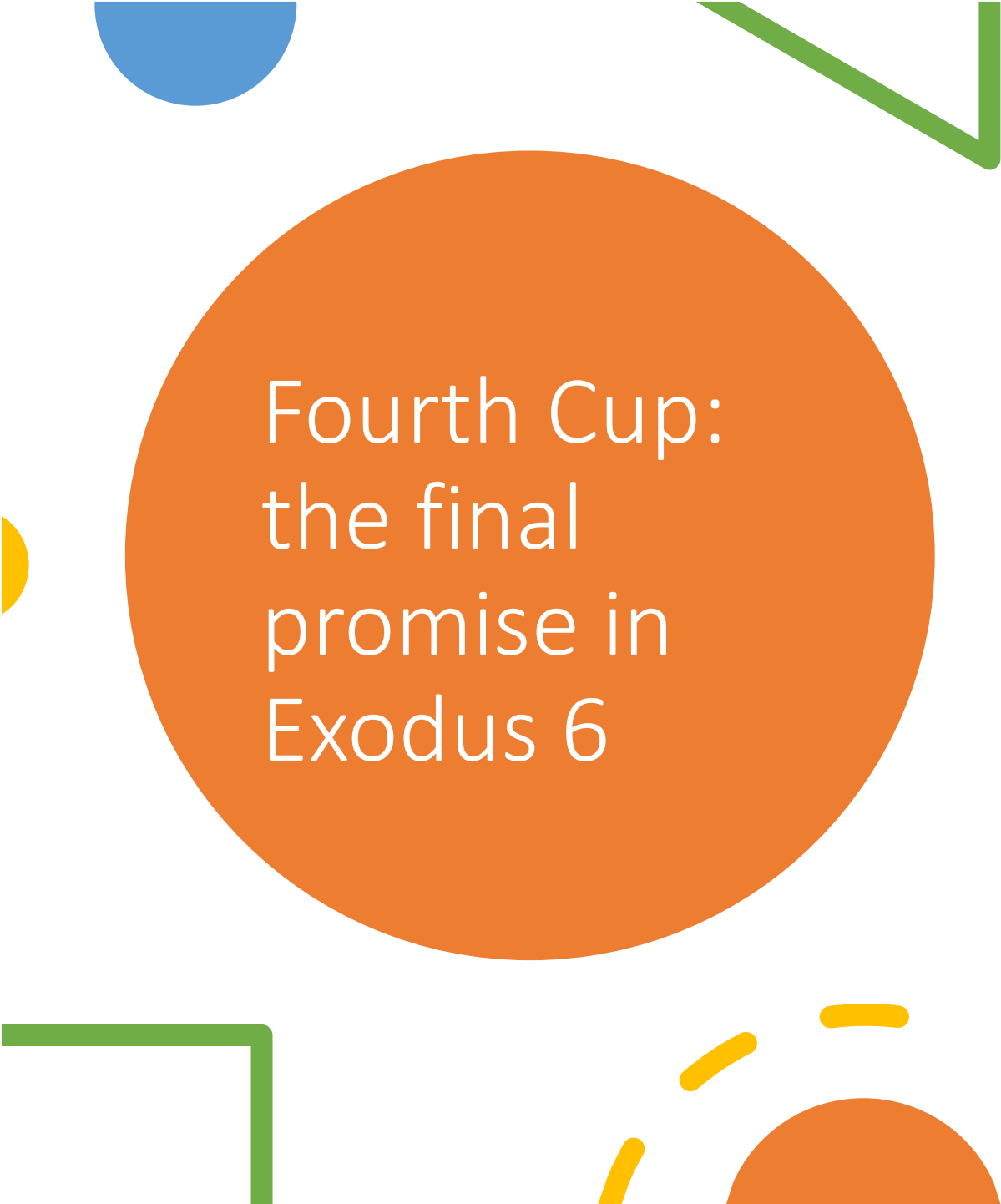
Hallel: Psalms of Praise

- Prior to the meal we read Psalms 113 and 114.
- Now after the meal we read Psalms 115 through 118.
- We follow by reading the Great Hallel, Psalm 136, which promises that God will provide food for all people.



Birkat Hashir: Blessing after Hallel

- Blessing recited after any recitation of Hallel.
- Many people today skip over this beautiful prayer, which begins, “The soul of every living thing shall praise Your name, Adonai our God, and the spirit of all flesh glorify and exalt Your name forever, O Sovereign...”



Fourth Cup:
the final
promise in
Exodus 6

- We now drink the fourth cup of wine.
- It commemorates the fourth promise in Exodus 6, “I will take you as my people.”
- Some families place Miriam’s cup on the table as well. It reminds us of Miriam’s well, which according to Jewish lore sustained the Israelites with water in the wilderness, and alongside of Elijah’s cup brings a female hero into the seder ceremony.

Nirtzah: The Seder's Conclusion

- L'shanah haba'ah birushalayim:
- Most often translated as, "Next Year in Jerusalem."
- But scholar Marc Michael Epstein translates, "By this time next year may the messiah come and we'll all be in Jerusalem."
- A messianic hope, as mentioned in the opening prayer, slide 10: Ha Lachma Anya's closing line: "Next year free people."
- Thus our seder ends as it began, with a promise of freedom for the Jewish people and all humanity.
- No wonder the seder is the most popular ceremony of the Jewish year: it celebrates the urge of the human spirit toward freedom, and the eternal drive to liberate humanity, "On that day Adonai shall be one and [Adonai's] name shall be one."